

**CONGRESSWOMAN MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**  
**Hearing on H.R. 1595, The Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act**  
**Statement for the Record**  
**April 20, 2005**

Chairman Pombo, Ranking Member Rahall and Members of the Committee:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member for providing the people of Guam this opportunity to have a hearing on H.R. 1595, the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act. I also wish to thank the 66 current cosponsors on both sides of the aisle who have indicated their support for this bill on its introduction. I am also pleased to be joined today by my predecessors in Congress, the Honorable Robert Underwood and the Honorable Ben Blaz, whose past and continuing efforts have helped bring us to this point today. I also recognize Lt. Governor Kaleo Moylan, who appeared before the Committee to address this very issue last July, and Senator Tony Unpingco and Senator B.J. Cruz, whose work on the Guam War Claims Review Commission is to be commended. For all of those who traveled from Guam, welcome.

I wish to acknowledge Chairman Mauricio Tamargo, Chair of the Guam War Claims Review Commission, whose commitment and compassion has inspired us all. I also recognize Commission Members Ruth Van Cleve and former Congressman Robert Lagomarsino who could not be here today but who expressed to me their complete support of the Review Commission's report and this bill that implements their recommendations.

Mr. Chairman, today we will hear testimony on H.R. 1595, the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act. While each person will bring their own perspective, raise their own concerns, and tell their own stories, you will find one continuous thread connecting them all: it is time for Congress to resolve the issue of Guam war claims and honor the loyalty and sacrifice demonstrated by the people of Guam during enemy occupation in World War II. Two of today's witnesses, Congressman Ben Blaz and Senator Tony Unpingco, are themselves survivors of this brutal occupation, and I urge you to pay particular attention to their very personal testimony. I have also submitted written statements from many survivors and individuals in Guam who were not able to be heard by the Committee today but whose testimonies are nonetheless powerful statements of passion and conviction.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record the following testimony:

The Honorable Felix P. Camacho, Governor of Guam  
The Honorable Joanne M. Salas Brown, Vice Speaker  
The Honorable Judith T. Won Pat, Democratic Minority Leader  
The Honorable Lou Leon Guerrero  
The Honorable Doris Flores Brooks, Guam Public Auditor  
Jermaine Alerta, Representative of the 25th Youth Congress  
Trini Torres

Bernadita S. Borja  
Jon Junior Calvo  
Beatrice Castro  
Isabel Chargualaf  
Maria Leon Guerrero  
Antonina C. Diaz  
Jose R. Duenas  
Cathy Sablan Gault  
Eloy Perez Hara  
Maria Arriola Santos Harper  
Bernadette Manibusan Lastimoza  
Francisco Meno  
Jesusa I. O'Connor and Jesús P. Ignacio  
Alfred Baza Pangelinan  
Maria P. Perez  
Michael F. Phillips, Esq.  
Wallace Roberto  
Rosa B. Sablan  
Peter San Nicolas  
Joseph L.G. Santos  
Lola Sablan Santos  
Adolf Sgambelluri  
Julie Iriarte Sisson  
Jeannine Aguon Souki  
Joseph D. Tenorio

I also hope there will be an opportunity for the Committee to view a short video of testimony from a hearing held by the Guam War Claims Review Commission in Guam on December 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of 2003.

The bill we are reviewing today was provided to me as a drafting service by the Department of the Interior, and this bill accurately implements the recommendations of the Review Commission. The Review Commission made specific recommendations that for the most part enjoy wide support in Guam. Their recommendations are the starting point for the consideration of legislation that would provide additional compensation for Guam war claims and recognize the Chamorro experience in Guam during World War II. It is important to note that concerns have been raised regarding a provision of H.R. 1595 that implements one of the Review Commissions' specific recommendations in defining "eligible survivor" as someone who is living in the year 1990. The Committee will hear testimony on how this compromise was reached and determine the possibility of perfecting H.R. 1595 by amending this provision. I support perfecting H.R. 1595 through such an amendment, based on the underlying premise that due to past failures to address this issue, survivors of the occupation have died before war claims could be re-opened. I will work with the Committee leadership on this issue and I urge the Committee and the Congress to support an amendment to perfect this bill.

Our primary task today is to help the Congress understand the compelling case for re-opening Guam war claims as the Review Commission has unequivocally recommended. The Review Commission was created to help us get past the sticking points that have thwarted Guam war claims efforts in the past. This independent Commission reviewed the historical record, analyzed all available accounts, compared different war claims statutes, and concluded without a doubt that a serious injustice had occurred in the administration of the Guam Meritorious Claims Act, so much so that a specific legislative remedy was recommended.

We have before us a comprehensive record that was produced by a Commission that was charged with finding the truth – and reporting to Congress what the real deal is. And now, in learning the truth, neither Congress nor the Bush Administration can turn its back on what was learned. A light beam has been directed at an injustice and there is no way that this light can be extinguished. We know the truth about what is nicely termed a “disparity”, and that truth emboldens us today.

We have known for sixty years, from the stories of the survivors of the occupation of Guam, what the experience has been of the Chamorro people of Guam. We have known that a great uncertainty existed for sixty years as to whether the people of Guam have been treated fairly by the federal government. And now there is absolutely no doubt. There is no room to impugn the integrity of Chairman Tamargo and his Commission. There is no margin for claiming that “on the one hand this” and “on the other hand that.” Perhaps that is why the Administration has declined to testify today. Perhaps the one lone bureaucrat whose miserable job was to write testimony opposing H.R. 1595 actually had to read the report to rebut its conclusions and in so doing came to the same conclusion...because there is no place else to go today. There is no other interpretation; there is no way to split hairs any longer. The question now is no longer “what is the right thing to do”, instead, it is, “How much longer do we have to wait for justice?”

Passing legislation, especially one that has budgetary implications is always difficult. Yes, it is difficult, but I can name a few things more difficult...being forced to witness a beheading, like the people at the Tai massacre is more difficult; having to decide which of your children will eat because there is not enough food, as many Chamorros had to do, is more difficult; marching to Manengon with all your possessions on your back in the middle of the night is more difficult; surviving the occupation of Guam is more difficult.

I will close by reading the very first finding of the Guam War Claims Review Commission, which I believe to be an important source of wisdom as we consider this legislation:

“There is a moral obligation on the part of our national government to pay compensation for war damages, in order to ensure to the extent possible that no single individual or group of individuals bears more than a just part of the overall burden of war.”

Thank you and Si Yu’os Ma’åse.